



CHS South

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CHS South Information regarding Exam Access Arrangements

What is an Access Arrangement?

If a student has an identified learning need or disability that means that he or she is disadvantaged in comparison to other students of similar ability, he or she may qualify for access arrangements for public examinations. There are a number of different types of access arrangement, and these are determined by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). The main ones are listed at the bottom of this document. The criteria that must be met for an access arrangement changes frequently and JCQ issue guidance booklets every year. You can access these online – www.jcq.org.uk for information.

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make ‘reasonable adjustments’.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage.

A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include but are not limited to: the needs of the disabled candidate; the effectiveness of the adjustment; the cost of the adjustment; and the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body; involves unreasonable timeframes; or affects the security and integrity of the assessment. This is because the adjustment is not ‘reasonable’.

When we will assess a student

We will aim to assess all students at the end of year 9 or start of Year 10 in order to determine whether students meet the criteria and subsequently apply for access arrangements to be granted. Any application is only valid for 26 months and it is for this reason that we do not apply earlier.

For us to apply, we need to provide evidence of an ongoing need and show that the access arrangement we apply for is the student’s normal way of working. Therefore, throughout Years 7, 8 and 9 we may trial various strategies and conduct several different tests and assessments in order to make sure that we are not only meeting the criteria but that we can work out what might be the best provision for your child.

No access arrangement is formalised until the end of Year 9/start of Year 10 and any arrangement made before that time is essentially part of the assessment process. This can be quite confusing for parents as we are aware that students have sometimes been granted an access arrangement for tests at primary school. Please be aware that these do not carry forward and that the assessment process for GCSE examinations, does not occur until year 9/10. Please



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also be aware that having an Education Health and Care Plan or diagnosis of a Specific Learning Difficulty, does not necessarily mean that a student will qualify for access arrangements, even if your child has regular in class support.

If you have any queries, please contact Miss Sloan or Miss Austin, SENCo and ACL Access and Achievement.

Access arrangements information

Below is a summary of the current JCQ directives regarding access arrangements.

Supervised rest breaks:

These must always be considered before applying for extra time.

These will be allowed where it is the candidate's normal way of working.

Medical conditions – rest breaks can be agreed if you have a serious medical condition, examples of this are type 1 diabetes or a sensory need. Medical evidence is required. ADHD - if you have a diagnosis, we will look at the recommendations and consider whether rest breaks will be helpful in exams. Evidence of your diagnosis is required.

Evidence from CAMHs of current treatment for a condition that requires rest breaks. However, we do not accept evidence from this service if you have been discharged from treatment.

Please Note: We are not able or allowed to provide rest breaks in advance for anxiety/worry/stress caused by taking exams. It is normal to feel stressed and worried about exams. Please feel reassured that our exam invigilators are experienced and trained to deal with students who are upset and worried on the day.

Prompter:

These do not need to be registered on Access Arrangements Online.

A prompter may be permitted where a candidate has a substantial and long-term adverse impairment resulting in persistent distractibility or significant difficulty in concentrating.

25% extra time:

These must be applied for and registered on Access Arrangements Online.

- Applications will be considered based on either a Statement of Special Educational Need or an assessment carried out no earlier than Year 9 by a specialist assessor to confirm a learning difficulty.
- Candidates with 25% extra time normally sit their examinations in the hall (unless an additional arrangement such as a reader/scribe is in place).
- Candidates must have at least one below average standardised score of 84 or less in either;
 - Speed of reading
 - Speed of reading comprehension
 - Speed of writing
 - Cognitive processing measures.

Allocation of a reader:

These must be applied for and registered on Access Arrangements Online.

Applications will be considered based on either a Statement of Special Educational Need or an assessment carried out no earlier than Year 9 by a specialist assessor to confirm a learning difficulty.

A reader will only be allowed if; language and vocabulary difficulties have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the candidates' ability to access written text or there is a substantial and long-term visual impairment which means the candidate cannot access Braille or enlarged print independently.

Where substantial impairment is evidenced, the SENCO must be able to demonstrate the candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other, non-disabled candidates undertaking the exam.

Allocation of a scribe:

These must be applied for and registered on Access Arrangements Online.

Applications will be considered based on either a Statement of Special Educational Need or an assessment carried out no earlier than Year 9 by a specialist assessor to confirm a learning difficulty.

If a word processor is the candidates' normal way of working within school, then it should be used within examinations.

The use of a scribe must reflect the candidates' normal way of working within school.

A scribe should only be used where a candidate cannot use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check disabled.

A scribe will only be allowed where; impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the candidates' writing or a candidate cannot write, type or Braille independently, or at sufficient speed to record their answers even with extra time allowed.

Word Processor:

The following criteria details how the centre awards and allocates word processors for examinations and controlled assessments.

If a candidate believes they should be using a word processor for their examinations and/or controlled assessments, they must first speak with the SENCo. The use of a laptop will only be granted to a student if it is appropriate to their needs and approved by the SENCo.

The JCQ requirement and recommendation for candidates regarding the use of word processors in examinations and/or controlled assessments is that this is their normal way of working.

Where possible, students taking year group, in class and other tests and assessments will have the opportunity to use a laptop, if one is available. There will be occasions, particularly during the year 11 mock exam series and the summer public exam series, where laptops may not be available to other year groups.

We do not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home

Separate Invigilation: (students sit with others in a smaller room rather than in the Sports Hall) for examinations and controlled assessments.

There is a high demand for separate invigilation, and we require medical evidence of need from a consultant or specialist - we cannot accept a letter from GPs. This must be dated within one year of the exam to be taken. Unless it is for a serious, acute and/or chronic medical or psychological condition, we cannot provide Separate Invigilation. General anxiety, low mood, stress indicators or other common conditions or factors will generally not provide adequate evidence for separate invigilation.

Individual Invigilation

Individual Invigilation can only be accommodated in highly exceptional circumstances. We require evidence of need from a consultant or specialist which provides details of the student’s condition and states exactly why Individual Invigilation is necessary. Following submission of this evidence, the SENCo and Examinations Officer will make a final decision and communicate this back to the applicant and parents/carers.

Medication

It is the responsibility of the student and parents/carers to ensure that the pupil has taken the correct medication, for example, dexamfetamine for ADHD before an exam.